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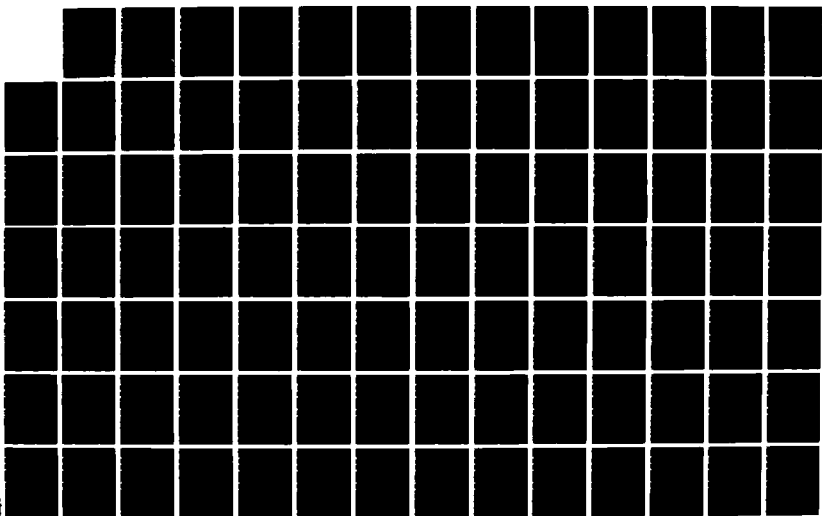
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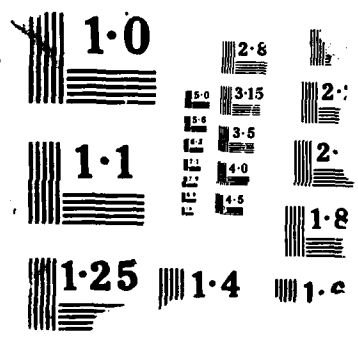
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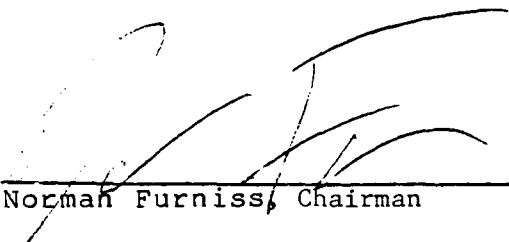
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IRELAND AND THE DEFENSE
OF WESTERN EUROPE:
ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS


Dennis R. Anderson

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree
Master of Arts
in the Department of West European Studies in the Graduate School,
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May 1988

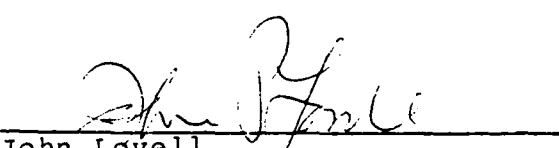
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of Master of Arts.



Norman Furniss, Chairman



James Christoph



John Lovell

FOR LYNETTE

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- D.R.A.
Bloomington, Indiana
May, 1988

INTRODUCTION

The leader of a young Irish Republic declared near the onset of the Second World War that Ireland, like several other European countries, intended to remain neutral in the pending conflict. This was a position she was able to maintain throughout the war thanks in large part to her geographic remoteness from the European Continent. Ireland's neutralist stance at that time was a gamble which faced considerable domestic opposition, most notably from military, church, and some political leaders. As the success of the gamble became increasingly apparent, the "doctrine" of Irish neutralism seemed to have built its own momentum until, at the end of the War, it was widely supported.

Critics have charged that Ireland was avoiding its responsibility to contribute materially to Western defense and that she lamely pointed to the issue of partition as a convenient excuse to do so. This criticism continues today in the face of her post-war neutralism. Clearly, Irish animosity toward Britain has been the root cause of her unwillingness to cooperate in Western military efforts.

How committed is Ireland's political leadership to neutralism? Under what conditions might the policy

change? What pressures, domestic and external, exist on this issue? The focus of this paper is on the unique qualities of Irish neutrality, how malleable it might be, and on whether NATO's political leaders should urge those in Ireland to join the Alliance. Additionally, the following question is addressed: So what? That is, does it matter whether Ireland is now (or is soon to be) a NATO member?

To answer these questions it is necessary first to examine some background issues, as well as the current role Ireland sees for herself among the nations of the world. In chapter one we do this by considering the basics of Irish geography, history, government, and politics. This analysis reveals an ethnically homogeneous land with troubled but undeniably important ties to Great Britain, ties which are reflected culturally, linguistically, and governmentally. So preoccupied have the Irish been with their powerful neighbor, that their two major political parties were founded based on differences in approach to Britain. Not long after the hard-line party first controlled the government, Irish neutralism, as official state policy, was born.

The second chapter discusses the unique role in the international arena which the Irish have found for

themselves. Any nation's defense policy must serve to further its overall foreign policy objectives. Ireland's foreign policy orientation has undergone considerable evolution in the 66 years since she became an independent state. At first, she understandably was preoccupied with her relations with Great Britain. The two nations shared a love-hate relationship which continues today. Love, because the Irish and British share common values, a common language, and are major trading partners; hate, because of resentment on the part of the Irish of centuries of British wrongs perpetuated on an "oppressed" people. As the Irish state matured, her leaders sought for her a role in international affairs that met what they saw as an unfilled need: that of a bridge between the First and Third Worlds. As a formerly oppressed British dominion located in generally prosperous Northern Europe, Ireland has seen herself uniquely qualified to bridge the gap between the wealthy former colonial powers and the oppressed and exploited former colonies. This orientation has important implications for her neutralist position. A nation assuming such a role cannot take sides in the most obviously committal area of policy: that of defense. She pursues, therefore, what she sees to be an innovative foreign policy, a

policy manifested in the positions she takes in international forums.

One of those forums has been the European Economic Community (EEC). Irish leaders wanted badly to enter the Community and went to extraordinary lengths to win acceptance. Their efforts paid off in 1973 after a dozen years of frustration. One of the aims of the European Community has been the eventual integration of the states of Western Europe. Although the realization of this goal is not imminent, the fact that the Irish have subscribed to the founding treaty of the EEC, with its potential for a single structure for European defense, has obvious implications for the continuance of Irish neutralism. In the meantime, the EEC is making attempts at developing common foreign policy positions as issues arise. Ireland, for its part, is often joined by other small member countries in calling for "progressive" Community positions.

Having considered in the first two chapters the current context in which Irish policy is made, we examine in depth in chapter three the evolution of Irish neutrality, beginning with its historical antecedents prior to the founding of the current state. This examination reveals that the Irish brand of neutrality is unlike any other. Building on a foundation of Anglo-

Irish animosity, Eamon de Valera officially declared an Irish neutralist position that was eventually tied strictly to the "artificial" partition of the nation imposed by Great Britain, a partition based on the religious preferences of the majorities of people living on either side of the boundary. He declared that a military alliance with the nation (Britain) responsible for the division of the Ireland would be simply unacceptable. The linking of neutrality to partition was not emphasized until America entered the War. This was probably because the Irish--cognizant of their special relationship with the United States--believed that doing so made neutrality more comprehensible and acceptable across the Atlantic.

Despite the connection to partition, Irish neutrality has never been clearly defined or codified, as is the case in Switzerland, for example. Nevertheless, it has developed in the country a nearly sacred status; criticism of it is almost taboo. This was not quite the case in the immediate post-WWII years. As the North Atlantic Treaty Organization formed, Ireland chose to reassert her neutralist stance by declining an Anglo-American invitation to join, while taking pains to acknowledge that her sympathies lay clearly with the West. Partition, again, was the stated

basis.

As the Irish government sought membership of the EEC, her leaders seemed willing to sacrifice neutrality at the altar of economic necessity. All the other Community nations were, after all, members of NATO and the Irish recognized that defense policy, like trade policy (the major focus of the EEC), constitutes an integral part of any nation's foreign policy. As it turned out, membership in the EEC for Ireland was not predicated on her joining the Atlantic defense alliance. The fact that her leaders considered entering NATO in consideration for being admitted to the EEC reveals a pragmatic quality of Irish neutralism that non-Irish observers should keep in mind.

Having looked in Chapter III at the evolution and tenuous nature of Irish neutralism, we turn our attention in Chapter IV to the advantages and disadvantages, from a NATO standpoint, of having Ireland in the Alliance now, in peacetime. There are today no indications that Ireland will soon abandon its neutralist stance in favor of entering the Alliance, nor is she under considerable domestic or external pressure to do so. In fact, neutrality is widely supported and could be abandoned only at a prohibitive political cost. Many Irishmen oppose NATO membership on moral grounds,

rejecting especially any Irish association with nuclear weapons. Is the island so critical to the defense of the West that the leaders of the NATO countries should apply immediate pressure on Ireland's in order to persuade them to abandon neutralism in favor of full alliance membership? Or, is Ireland merely a "nice to have" strategic backwater with a troubled domestic political scene which makes the costs of Irish membership outweigh any benefits? Her geographic location, as well as certain of her physical characteristics, would make her a desirable (yet, not critical) ally for the West should war with the Warsaw Pact nations ever come to Europe. However, her military forces are small and poorly-equipped, and not trained to operate under standard NATO procedures. Moreover, any NATO facilities erected in the Republic in peacetime probably would be threatened by terrorist activity. In short, as detailed in the fourth chapter, the dubious value to NATO of Irish membership in peacetime must be weighed against the considerable costs involved.

The obvious question then is, what would Ireland do in wartime? This is a question other writers have avoided. To answer it, it is important to understand why nations go to war. Reasons of bumbling, confusion, miscommunication, and misperception aside; nations

ostensibly enter wars to protect vital interests and to defend basic principles. In the Second World War these ingredients were decidedly lacking for the Irish. Today, however, the situation is considerably different. Chapter V examines Ireland's considerable stake in the nations of the Atlantic Alliance. Long before her entrance to the EEC, Ireland was heavily dependent on trade with the NATO countries, especially Great Britain and, to a lesser degree, the United States. After she and the United Kingdom joined the Community, this dependence has not diminished, but has merely been more evenly distributed among the countries of NATO. Perhaps more important than NATO-Irish trade are the considerable economic benefits the Irish state, Irish businesses, and Irish citizens derive from EEC membership. Ireland was, at the time of her accession in 1973, the poorest member of the EEC. Since then she has been a major beneficiary of the organization's regional development and agricultural subsidy policies and is clearly dependent on such aid today. While her economy is weak by Western European standards, it certainly would be in far worse condition had it not been for the infusion of those Community benefits. This fact greatly affects what the Irish must see as their vital national interests; i.e., those they might be

willing to defend. Should NATO's forces be attacked by those of the Warsaw Pact, Ireland would most probably join the fray; for as a member of the EEC, her vital national interests now extend from the Skaggerak to the Aegean, from the Iberian Peninsula to--most significantly--the inter-German border.

I. BACKGROUND FACTORS

In order to fully appreciate the myriad factors which contribute to Irish foreign and defense policies it is important first to consider pertinent facts of the Republic's geography, history, politics, government, and economy. This chapter provides a review and analysis of these factors, revealing an ethnically-homogeneous island nation which feels itself to be not yet whole. It is a nation which both resents and emulates Great Britain, its long-dominant neighbor. It is a politically stable parliamentary democracy lacking ideological polarity among its major parties, both of which are also firmly committed to the capitalist market economy. They are firmly committed to a view that the state should provide basic social welfare benefits to all citizens, especially those victims of the vicissitudes of capitalism. Such policies are expensive, particularly for a nation that is the poorest in Northern Europe.

Geography

The twenty-six counties of the Republic of Ireland occupy approximately four-fifths of the island of

Ireland, with the six counties of Northern Ireland occupying the remainder of the island. (See Figure 1-1) Eire, as the island is called in the native gaelic language, is separated from the island of Great Britain by the Irish Sea.

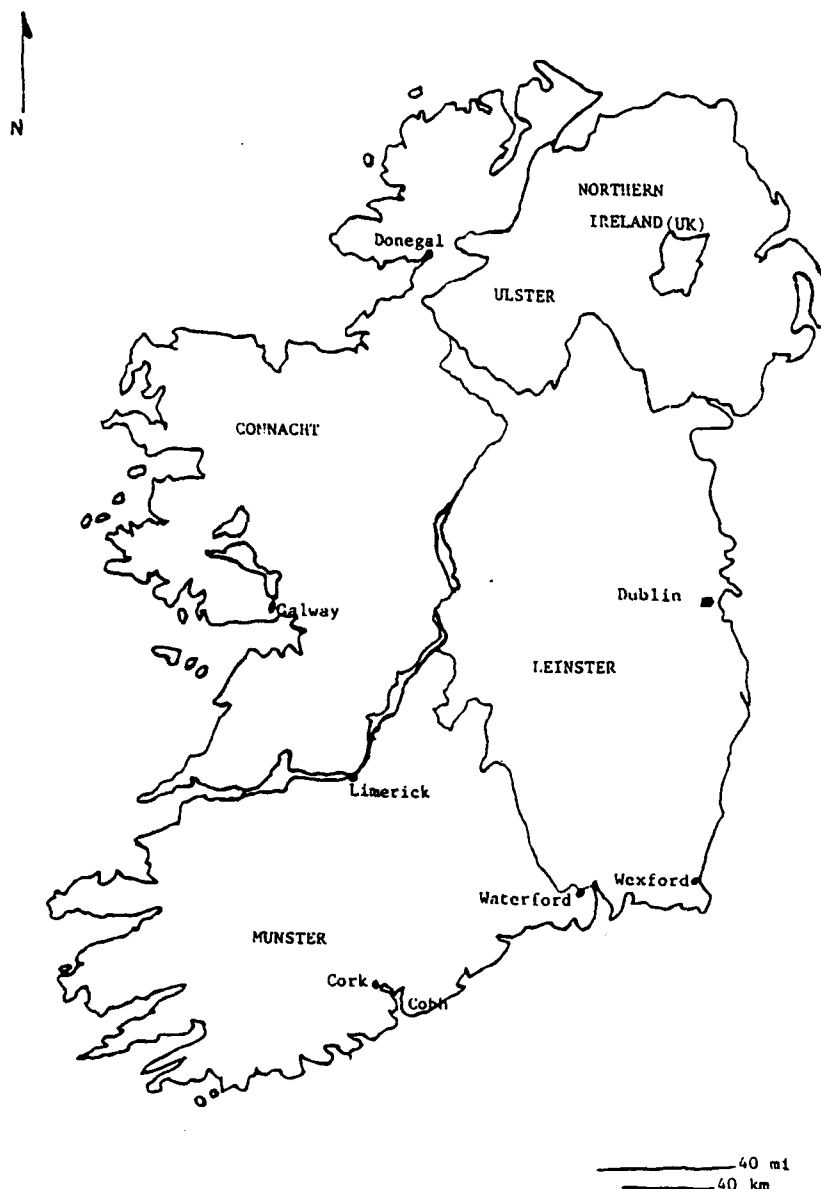


Figure 1-1. The Island of Ireland

The Irish have always been acutely aware of their position as an "island behind an island", two steps from the continent. Historically, this geographic reality has had a two-fold effect. On the positive side it has provided the luxury of allowing the Irish to avoid continental wars. Less advantageously, it has meant that communication with the remainder of the world required routing through Great Britain, which might consciously or unconsciously act as a buffer, as it did, for example, in halting the spread of the Reformation. Perhaps more importantly, the geographic position of Eire has--long before the formation of the Republic in the 1920's--mandated an economic and cultural dependence upon the English. The geo-strategic importance of Eire's location is, of course, of more immediate relevance to this paper. It is discussed at length in Chapter Four.

The island's terrain is dominated by a central plain containing several low hill ridges. This area is drained by the Shannon and Boyne rivers and is surrounded by higher lands in the northwest, the east, the west and the southwest. The coastline is rugged but nevertheless contains several ports of potential military value (see Chapter IV), most of which have been

allowed to deteriorate.

Most of the land is used for agriculture, as Ireland is poor in mineral resources. The south and east, with their favorable climate and soil conditions, contain the most productive farmlands. Energy is obtained from hydroelectric stations on the Shannon as well as from the burning of peat. The major industrial areas surround the cities of Dublin, Cork and Wexford. In general the island's climate is cool and moist, with mean monthly temperatures ranging from 2 C to 19 C and with Dublin averaging 760 mm of precipitation annually.

The Republic's population of 3.6 million share 70,300 square kilometers, yielding a population density of 47.9 per square kilometer. This is the lowest in the EC, yet it is nearly twice that of the United States. Although Gaelic is the official language, only about 1/4 of the people speak it. English, designated as the second language, is used in the conduct of everyday affairs. Officially, government and political institutions have Gaelic names which are used in most periodicals and scholarly works, as will be the convention in this paper.

About 94 per cent of the population is Roman Catholic, the remainder being primarily Anglican or Presbyterian. The six counties of Northern Ireland,

which is part of the United Kingdom, have, of course, Protestant majorities.¹ This distinction has served as the de facto basis for the division of the island and has, indirectly, brought decades of violence by competing factions.

History

The roots of Anglo-Irish animosity reach centuries back. In 432 a young Bishop named Patrick returned to his adopted Irish homeland (he was a native Briton) after several years in a continental monastery. He set out to evangelize the island, a remarkable feat which was nearly completed at the time of his death. The Irish Church, remote from Vatican influence, developed a network of powerful monasteries, which by the 9th Century possessed wealth enough to attract invasion from Viking raiders. Many of these Norsemen remained to intermarry with the Irish. Adrian IV, the only Englishman ever to be Pope, issued a papal bull in 1115 giving the King of England permission to control Ireland, but it was not until 1171 that King Henry II brought a force of British Normans into Ireland to establish British rule and to bring the Celtic style of Irish christianity under the control of the Roman Catholic Church. Eventually, the Normans became

assimilated into the Irish/Celtic culture and British cultural influence declined. The influence of the Roman Church, however, remained strong. Therefore, when the Reformation finally took hold in England, a formidable schism based on religious differences developed between her and Ireland. The issues of religion and Irish nationalism became inextricably intermeshed, as is the case today. To quell this rising tide of revolutionary dissent and to impose puritanical protestantism Oliver Cromwell arrived from England in the 17th century. During his ruthless and ultimately unsuccessful campaign, thousands were killed or driven from their lands. In the years that followed, thousands of Britons emigrated to Ireland.

Eventually a catholic Monarch, James II, took the English throne only to be driven from it in 1690 by William of Orange, a protestant. His ascendancy to the throne brought harsh retribution to Ireland in the form of oppressive Penal Laws. Drawing inspiration from the American and French revolutions, Irish idealists--both Protestant and Catholic--banded together to establish a Republic. In 1798, a Franco-Irish force seeking to forcibly oust the British was soundly defeated.

In 1800 the English, in an attempt to assimilate Ireland into the same mold as Scotland and Wales, passed

the Act of Union. This law abolished the Irish Parliament and provided instead for Irish representation in the British Parliament. This action was met in 1803 with an unsuccessful attempt at revolution.

Disaster struck the island in 1845 when the nation's potato crop failed due to a blight. Over half the population of 8 1/2 million, virtually all of them Catholics, relied heavily on the potato as a staple of their diets. When the blight returned in 1846 and 1847, one million persons died of starvation and another million emigrated. English efforts at providing relief were inadequate, with some Irishmen characterizing the British attitude as one of indifference and of acceptance of the "natural order of things." Resentment toward the British grew.

Many Irish emigrants who had prospered abroad continued to support their homeland's independence efforts. Some did so through parliamentary channels, others chose to fund armed revolutionary groups that established fronts in both the United States and Ireland. Irish influence in the British Parliament ebbed and flowed and, at one high point, nearly resulted in a Home Rule law in 1890. Finally, in 1912, a Home Rule bill did pass but its implementation was halted by the advent of the First World War. Irish

revolutionaries, seeing an opportunity in Britain's preoccupation with the Kaiser's Germany, staged an armed rebellion on Easter Sunday, 1916. The British, precisely because they were preoccupied with the continental war and could not long afford to expend resources on the Irish problem, reacted swiftly and harshly, crushing the rebellion within a week. Most of its leaders were summarily executed. One of the main plotters, a Mr. Eamon de Valera, however, was spared because he had been born in the United States.

After the end of World War I, de Valera's Sinn Fein movement again declared an Irish Republic, but this time opted to rely on terrorist raids and hunger strikes rather than direct armed confrontation. In 1920, Britain's Parliament passed the government of Ireland Act, which established two Home Rule parliaments: one for the six counties in Ulster with protestant majorities and another for the remaining twenty-six predominantly catholic counties. In January 1922 an Irish republican government concluded a treaty which made Ulster a part of the United Kingdom and which declared the rest of Ireland a free state with dominion status within the British Commonwealth.

De Valera and the Sinn Fein opposed the treaty and he led a violent resistance against it, engaging the

newborn Irish Free State in an eighteen month civil war. He was forced to give up the fight and soon decided to form an opposition political party, the Fianna Fail, and to work for change within the established political framework.² Chapters II and III of this paper contain detailed discussions of de Valera's rise to legitimate political power as well as the related history of the Irish Republic.

Government

Having long been influenced by British political values the Irish have embraced constitutions which ensured individual liberties and which provided for governments which were parliamentary democracies. Ireland's first constitution was that of Dail Eireann (1919) and it included a "declaration of independence" and a socialist-style "Democratic Programme."³ It was designed to be a provisional constitution that would facilitate the establishment of an independent Irish Republic.⁴ The Constitution of Dail Eireann was replaced in 1922 with the Constitution of the Irish Free State. It reflected both the desire for the nation to assert its newly-won independence as well as the close connection between Ireland and Great Britain. Gone in this iteration were many of the socialist-sounding

aspects of the 1919 document. It provided for a cabinet system of government with tight control by the Oireachtas (parliament). In the ten years it was in effect, the Free State's constitution was amended twenty-seven times, although this did not "indicate dissatisfaction with the cabinet system in general." ⁵

In 1937 the government of Eamon de Valera proposed a new constitution, Bunreacht na hEireann, which remains in force today. Although he opposed the 1922 Anglo-Irish Treaty and was a rebel for eighteen months following the establishment of the Free State, de Valera had long since decided to work within the political system. Nevertheless, it is not surprising that his constitution should reflect an alteration in Ireland's status vis-a-vis Great Britain. Unqualified by Commonwealth symbolism, his new constitution stressed that it was enacted by the people (through a referendum) and that government derived its power from the same. This is, of course, a theme common to many national constitutions which were patterned after the American document. Constitutions of other Commonwealth nations acknowledge the United Kingdom to be a source of power. De Valera, rejecting rule from without, probably intended this expression of popular sovereignty to be a tacit renunciation of Ireland's Dominion status. This

is reinforced by his constitution's provision for a president as head of state, rather than the British Monarch. Other than this addition, the machinery of government remained fundamentally unchanged from the Free State Constitution.⁶

Bunreacht na hEireann does not, as might be expected, declare Ireland a republic. Such a declaration was seen as so complete a break from the Commonwealth as to make the reunification of all thirty-two counties impossible. Nevertheless, it does declare that the state includes the whole island of Eire. As de Valera explained in the Dail: "If the northern problem were not there ... there would be a flat, downright proclamation of a republic in this [constitution]." This tenuous link to the Commonwealth was finally renounced in 1948 with the enactment by de Valera's government of the Republic of Ireland Act, a fact the British acknowledged in the following year.

A common misconception about Bunreacht na hEireann is that it contains a firm declaration of the nation's neutrality. It does not. Irish neutralism, as we shall see, was formally declared several years later. Some attempts have been made to use the constitutional language regarding national sovereignty as a basis for objecting to participation in alliances, military or

economic.

Like the Constitution of the Free State, de Valera's constitution provides for a parliament (Oireachtas) with upper and lower houses (Seanad and Dail, respectively). A prime minister (Taoiseach), selected by the Dail, heads the government. It further established a national court system explicitly given the power to interpret law and to rule on the constitutionality of parliamentary acts.

The Roman Catholic Church is given special mention in de Valera's constitution and its influence is most evident in articles concerning family and education issues. Despite the unique recognition afforded the Roman Church, de Valera was careful to assuage Protestant fears through the inclusion of guarantees of freedom of religion.

According to the Constitution, elections for members of the Dail must be held at least every five years. In practice, because of political exigencies, Dail elections have taken place about every three to three-and-a-half years. Ireland utilizes a proportional representation electoral system with the added feature of the single transferable vote, which provides that the elector may authorize the transfer of his vote from the candidate of his first choice if that candidate does not

need it or if he cannot win. The voter indicates an ordinal preference by numbering the candidates (1, 2, 3, etc.).

Politics

The Irish electoral system has resulted most often in the selection of Fianna Fail governments. Fianna Fail is one of two mass appeal parties in Ireland; the other is Fine Gael. Unlike those found in most of Western Europe, these two parties are not separated by a great ideological barrier, reflecting social divisions in the Irish polity. Rather, they are delineated by the positions taken with respect to the 1922 Anglo-Irish Treaty establishing the Irish Free State, with the early Fine Gael leaders having acquiesced in the Treaty and with their Fianna Fail counterparts having rejected that compromise of their republican principles. As mentioned earlier, those who eventually became members of the Fianna Fail had waged and lost a violent civil war. In 1926 they accepted the status quo, deciding to turn to parliamentary politics to achieve their aim of a united Ireland. On matters of domestic policy the two major parties take similar, often conservative positions. By European standards, they both must be classified center-right parties.

There is a growing Labour Party in Ireland that may one day contribute to the creation of a viable social-democratic alternative for Irish voters. It has long argued that social issues, not the Treaty or the national question of reunification, are of paramount importance. In a largely agrarian society, the Labour Party has never been able to muster more than 17 per cent of first-preference votes. However, as Ireland's economy continues to undergo a sectoral shift from agriculture to manufacturing, many believe that Labour's share of the vote will increase accordingly.

Economy

As in any democratic nation voters in Ireland often regard economic issues and economic performance to be of paramount importance. The performance of the Irish economy since the founding of the state has often been poor; at best, as in the 1970s, it has been mixed. Ireland's agricultural sector (the largest of any northern European country) is slowly shrinking (as a per cent of GDP) but continues to feature low marginal productivity. In 1986, agriculture accounted for eight per cent of the nation's gross domestic product. Only Greece of the European Community nations has a larger agricultural sector.⁷

Foreign trade concerns constitute an important

variable for any nation when formulating foreign policies. An examination of Ireland's trade figures reveals (see chapter V) that NATO nations are her biggest customers and suppliers. Historically, inflation has been a major economic problem for Ireland. In recent years, however, the inflation rate has been a manageable three per cent, down from 20 per cent in 1980. One reason often cited for her dramatic success in battling inflation is the recent strength of the Irish pound relative to the currencies of her two largest trading partners, Great Britain and the United States. This success, in turn, is often attributed to her membership in the European Monetary System, under which the central banks of member countries (all EC less Britain) are required to intervene to maintain stable exchange rates among their currencies.

While Irish policy makers have enjoyed dramatic success in controlling inflation, they are today faced with two major maladies: a huge fiscal deficit and critically high unemployment. An analysis by The Economist in January 1988 attributes the deficit to "a decade of borrowing to pay for better public services than its wealth justified . . . In the mid-1970s it set out to build a welfare state as generous as Britain's," despite recessionary imperatives towards fiscal

conservatism.⁸ The Economist further argues that a desire to have a social welfare level comparable to Northern Ireland's was a major motivation for Irish fiscal extravagance; that it was, therefore, a further manifestation of Irish nationalism.

To pay for its welfare state Ireland did indeed tax and borrow heavily. Between 1979 and 1984 taxes shot up 33 per cent (as a percentage of GNP). Raising taxes was not enough, though, as further funds had to be borrowed abroad. At the end of 1986, the total public foreign debt was \$16.5 billion, the highest (as a percentage of GDP) in the EC.

As stated earlier, a high unemployment rate is Ireland's other major economic problem. Nineteen percent of Irishmen are currently out of work, a rate second only to Spain within the EC. The problem is especially acute in the Dublin area.

The national strategy for combatting its economic problems has been, among other things, to seek foreign investment, especially from the United States. Clearly, Ireland provides unique benefits for American firms: the government guarantees a maximum corporate tax rate of 10 per cent; there is a large pool of well-trained English-speaking workers; and products manufactured in Ireland and marketed in Europe are of

course not subject to the EC's external tariff applied to goods manufactured in the United States. To further enhance the country's attractiveness to foreign companies, the government has invested heavily in improving the education of its youth and in developing a modern infrastructure for business. The government has been particularly active in the realm of higher education, where it provides large subsidies to cover student expenses in selected fields.

One result of this has been that Ireland is the most lucrative place in the EC for foreign investment and several large US firms have located plants there. Among these are Apple Computer, Digital Equipment Corporation, and Amdahl--all "hi-tech" companies. Unfortunately, the spillover into the indigenous Irish economy has not been as great as was hoped. Foreign companies operating in the Irish Republic import around 75 per cent of the materials needed in their manufacturing processes. Because the links between Irish and foreign firms are limited, the effect on employment levels has also been limited.⁹ The results of the national investment in higher education has been attenuated by a recurring Irish problem: emigration. In 1986 for example, nearly one-third of university graduates who found jobs did so overseas. The

percentage was even higher among new engineers, whose education benefitted from the highest level of subsidization.¹⁰

Conclusion

Ireland is unique in many respects. It is the newest independent republic in Northern Europe. It is also the poorest. It has strong ties to Britain, one of the continent's major powers, but many Irishmen harbor ill feelings towards her. Ireland is like Britain in many ways: in government, in language, in being an island nation, and in common fundamental values. She is Ireland's biggest trade partner. Yet, there remains a formidable barrier between the two. A barrier that has its roots in colonialism and is exacerbated by religious differences. So important are Irish attitudes towards Britain that her major political parties are distinguished not by ideological positions, but by their approach to solving with Britain Ireland's national question; i.e., partition. It is an issue with which Irishmen have long been preoccupied. An appreciation of this fact along with the basics of Irish geography, history, economics, politics and government are prerequisite for evaluating the motivations behind Irish foreign and defense policy formation.

ENDNOTES

¹Summarized from Richard Mayne, ed., Western Europe, (New York:Facts on File, 1987), p. 103.

²Summarized from Mark H. Mullin, "The Republic of Ireland," in Western Europe 1984, ed. Wayne C. Thompson (Washington:Stryker-Post Publications, 1984), pp. 225-30.

³Basil, Chubb, The Constitution and Constitutional Change in Ireland (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration), 1978, pp. 8-9.

⁴Ibid., p. 8-9.

⁵Ibid., p. 15.

⁶Mayne, p. 6.

⁷Mayne, p. 245.

⁸The Economist, January 16, 1988, p. survey 3.

⁹John O'Brien, "Irish Economy Concentrates on High Technology," Europe, July/August 1986, p. 42.

¹⁰The Economist, January 16, 1988, pp. survey 10, 13.

II. IRELAND IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

In January 1922, with the acceptance on the part of Ireland's Republican Government of Britain's "Government of Ireland Act", the independent Irish state was born. From then on, after centuries of foreign domination, the people of Ireland were free to manage their own affairs, domestic and foreign. Domestic strife dominated the first years of the newly-independent state as bloody civil war broke out immediately over the issue of whether the terms of independence (i.e., acceptance of the partition of the island) should have been accepted in the first place. The lone surviving leader of the opposition, Mr. Eamon de Valera, was forced to give up his fight after a year and a half. While the primary focus of this paper is Irish defense policy, it is important to recognize the overriding importance that the issue of the partition of the Irish island plays in all aspects of Irish political decisionmaking. It is an issue to which successive Irish governments have pointed to justify their controversial positions on security and foreign affairs. It is one of two facts relating to the Irish state that cannot be ignored when analyzing her policies. The other fact is Ireland's geographic

location relative to continental Europe and the rest of the world discussed in chapter one.

A desire to overcome the stigmas of the partition of the island since the founding of the Republic and the sense of dependence on her larger neighbor has been the guiding factor in the formulation of Irish foreign policies. In seeking to satisfy this desire Ireland has carved for herself a unique niche in the European and global orders. Ireland sees herself as a bridge between the "First World" of Europe and the "Third World" of countries which, like herself, have in this century emerged from the yoke of foreign domination. She explains her staunch neutrality in European wars in terms of her constitutionally-mandated struggle to unify all of her island. Yet, after ten years of trying to win a seat in the United Nations, she responded eagerly to UN calls for help in policing "hot spots" in Africa and the Middle East. She has stood by powerlessly as a French leader (de Gaulle) with a grudge against a third nation (Britain) summarily dismissed her applications to join the rest of Europe, when approval meant a great deal to her economy and her psyche. Once a member, however, she has not been reticent about asserting her rights and protecting her interests.

In Britain's Shadow

In her early years the Republic's foreign policies concentrated less on Europe as a whole and more on London. Indeed, Ireland learned government from the British, in whose parliament Irishmen had sat for years. The Irish Constitution, though (unlike her neighbors') a written document, was nevertheless patterned after Great Britain's. This did not mean, however, that the Irish viewed the English with fondness and respect. On the contrary, centuries of mutual animosity rooted in religious differences have carried over to this day and has been demonstrated through certain decisions made by the Dublin government.

Throughout the Second World War, for example, Ireland (though nominally a British dominion) remained neutral. The former revolutionary leader Eamon de Valera, the Taoiseach during the war years, flatly refused appeals from the British and the American governments to at least modify his country's stance. Ireland steadfastly refused even to observe black-outs in its cities at night. As a result, German aircraft were at times able to orient themselves over Irish cities before flying bombing missions over Britain's darkened industrial heartland.¹ De Valera's government

refused to sever diplomatic relations with the Axis powers and even conveyed Irish condolences to the German Ambassador upon learning of Adolf Hitler's death. Irish neutrality in World War II is discussed at length in the third chapter.

After the War, Ireland sought an expansion of her foreign focus that included less direct reliance on Britain. In 1948, the Government passed the "Republic of Ireland Act", withdrawing it from the British Commonwealth, forfeiting its dominion privileges and "clarifying once and for all the international status of the Twenty-six Counties."² In 1946 the Irish Government's application for membership in the United Nations was rejected through the veto of the Soviet Union "ostensibly on the grounds that she had openly sympathized with Axis powers during the war."³ Ireland finally succeeded in 1956 in gaining a UN seat, allowing her to play a modest but serious part in the organization's affairs.

Ireland and the Third World

After years under the British yoke, Ireland seems today to feel a certain affinity toward third-world states that were themselves former colonial possessions of major European powers. These sympathies have been

reflected to a limited extent in Ireland's voting behavior in the UN on Third World issues. In the late 1950's, for example, Ireland voted to support the rights of Tibet, Hungary and Algeria; introduced a proposal to halt the proliferation of atomic weapons; and, to the consternation of the United States, voted to entertain the question of seating a representative of the Peoples Republic of China.⁴ The Irish delegation has also been among the strongest of the Western states in supporting anti-Apartheid measures in the UN.⁵ In 1970 Ireland was the only West European state to vote in favor of all six UN resolutions on South Africa and Apartheid, including a controversial resolution calling for "specific aid to the liberation struggle."⁶ This tradition of championing the causes of smaller nations has manifested itself not only in the United Nations, but also later in the European Economic Community. Irish governments have repeatedly shown themselves willing to support the United Nations' calls for assistance in peacekeeping duties. In 1960, at the request of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold, Ireland sent two infantry battalions to the Congo to help police that strife-torn nation. The next year, Ireland's role was enhanced when the Chief of Staff of Ireland's Army assumed command of all United Nations'

forces in the Congo. Despite twenty-six deaths among Irish soldiers in their three years in Africa, bipartisan support for Ireland's role remained strong. Between 1964 and 1972 she contributed troops to the UN force on Cyprus; and in 1973 she committed 275 men to the UN Emergency force in the Sinai. Today, Irish soldiers make up a large segment of the United Nations Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL), established in 1978 after Israel's invasion of that country. An Irish general officer was Force Commander of UNIFIL from 1981-86.

Becoming Part of Europe

Throughout the period of the Republic's existence Great Britain has, of course, been her most important trading partner. When, in 1961, the UK sought membership in the EEC, it was an unquestioned economic imperative that Ireland do the same. Ireland could not afford to find herself on the opposite side of trade barriers vis-a-vis the British, although if that were necessary, clearly it would be much better for her to be on the European side. Equally clear was the fact that the Community's consideration of Ireland's application was secondary to and wholly dependent upon the outcome of the negotiations with the United Kingdom. As The Economist reported in October 1961, "The Council of

Ministers (of the EEC) were preoccupied with Great Britain's and Denmark's applications and referred Ireland's application back to the Commission."⁷ When General de Gaulle vetoed Britain's application in January 1963, Ireland's immediate fate was sealed. Because representatives of the Republic had not participated in the delicate negotiations between the EEC and the United Kingdom, the announcement of the results was, for her, a bombshell. The Irish government seemed to fully expect favorable results for the UK and a consequent coattail ride for herself.

Despite this disappointment, Sean Lemass' government continued to pursue a policy of preparation for free trade. Said Mr. Lemass: "...although it is undesirable to exaggerate the possibilities, the principle of bartering industrial tariffs where necessary for agricultural trade opportunities must be accepted."⁸

A British (and consequently Irish) application to the EEC was again considered in 1967. The prospect of entry to the Community at that time was opposed by some industrialists (beneficiaries of protectionist policies) but welcomed by farmers, who--at the time hurt in the British market by that country's agricultural deficiency payment system -- welcomed the opportunity to compete in

the Community agricultural market.⁹ In an effort to pre-empt continental opposition to the Republic's application, Mr. Jack Lynch (the Taoiseach) and Mr. Charles Haughey (Minister of Finance) completed an unprecedented whirlwind tour of the Capitals of "the Six" to plead their case in June and July 1967. The Irish leaders were convinced that membership of the EEC was critical to the prosperity of their economy, so much that they were willing to enter the community alone, without Britain, if necessary. To their later dismay General de Gaulle again blocked the entry of Ireland and Great Britain, this time before formal negotiations had ever begun.

Finally, on January 1, 1973, with a new regime in Paris, the EEC welcomed Ireland along with Denmark and the United Kingdom. Although not bargaining from a position of strength, Ireland's negotiators did manage to achieve favorable terms of entry for her, including immediate participation in the Common Agricultural Program (CAP), a transitional period with respect to automobile imports, and special protection for Irish fishermen for at least a ten year period.¹⁰

Entry into the European Communities was widely supported by the Irish people, as evident in the overwhelming endorsement given membership in the

national referendum held in May 1972. An 83 per cent majority voted in favor of amending the Constitution to permit Ireland's entry. Moreover, support for the measure was widespread, with the smallest majority (73%) being registered in southwest Dublin.¹¹ Dermot McAleese, professor of Economics at Trinity College in Dublin, suggests that five factors contributed to the success of the EEC referendum. First, Irish economic growth in the 1960's coupled with a high influx of foreign investment had instilled confidence in Ireland's ability to maintain growth and to hold its own in highly competitive European markets. Second, EEC membership would be a visible symbol of the Republic's independence from Great Britain. Third, the results of negotiations between the EEC and the European Free Trade Association (to which Ireland at that time belonged) reinforced a belief in Ireland that "little consideration for Ireland's agricultural export needs could be expected if the country remained outside the Community." A fourth factor was the favorable terms of entry described above. The last one was the solid endorsement given the measure by both of Ireland's major political parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael.¹² The electorate, as McAleese points out, "must also have been impressed by the fact, stressed by (Fine Gael leader) Dr. Garrett Fitzgerald,

that the political power structure of the EEC is heavily biased in favor of small nations."¹³

The issue of Irish sovereignty and independence was raised recently in connection with the EEC. In 1987 the EEC passed the Single European Act (SEA) which modified the Treaties of Rome, providing for, among other things, greater cooperation among its members in the area of foreign policy. The implementation of the SEA was delayed throughout the Community by a constitutional challenge in Ireland. An Irish court ruled that a national referendum must be held before the Government could ratify the act. The major political parties, cognizant of the importance of Ireland being a good citizen in the Community as well of the many benefits she accrues as a member, strongly urged the electorate to endorse the SEA. On May 27, 1987 the Irish people overwhelmingly approved the measure, affirming their commitment to Europe. As evident by this and other measures, the Irish seem happy to be members of the European Community.

The Northern Question

With the settlement of the EEC issue and its implications for economic independence from the United Kingdom, Irish attention throughout most of the 1970's

turned toward Northern Ireland, known in the South as "the Six Counties". Religious violence, manifested particularly by terrorist bombings on the part of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), dominated the decade. Within the Republic the debate centered on the appropriate stance to be taken. In August 1969, the Government called upon the United Nations to station a peacekeeping force in the North. This petition was, of course, vetoed by the United Kingdom (a permanent member of the UN Security Council) as improper interference in her domestic affairs.

The issue created an uproar in 1970 when the Taoiseach, Mr. Jack Lynch, fired two of his cabinet ministers (including Mr. Charles Haughey, the present Taoiseach) over their public opposition to his Northern Ireland policies. The two former ministers urged stronger support for anti-Unionist forces and complained that Mr. Lynch's "trilateral" approach (Dublin-London-Belfast), with its emphasis on negotiation and diplomacy, was ineffective. The nation was shocked when, on May 28, 1970, the two former cabinet ministers were arrested by Lynch's Justice Ministry for smuggling arms to the North. Some months later, both were cleared of all charges.

The issue of the Six Counties may have played a

significant role in the defeat of Lynch's Fianna Fail party in the February 1973 general election. The new governing coalition (between the Fine Gael and the Labour parties) headed by Mr. Liam Cosgrave maintained a non-interventionist, diplomatic approach to the Northern problem with somewhat more emphasis on primary negotiations with London. This approach became increasingly important after the assassination in Dublin of Great Britain's ambassador to the Republic on July 26, 1976, after which stricter controls went into effect at the inter-Irish border and throughout the South.

The British of course approved of the harder line that Dublin began to take and relations between the two governments were relatively good until August 1980, when Lord Mountbatten, a British hero in World War II, was killed by an IRA bomb that had been planted on his yacht. That was followed the next year by hunger strikes at the Maze prison in Northern Ireland by convicted IRA terrorists. Then, in May 1982, just after a confrontation with the British in Brussels over EEC farm prices, the Irish government decided not to endorse the Community's proposal to renew trade sanctions against Argentina, which was then at war with Britain over the Falkland Islands.¹⁴ Relations further soured with the establishment, in Dublin, in 1983 of the New

Ireland Forum, an organization of Catholic politicians in the North and in the Republic dedicated to seeking ways in which the northern counties could be politically incorporated into the Republic. The acrimonious tone of these events brought relations between the two nations to a post-war lowpoint.

A major improvement in Anglo-Irish relations came in 1985 when the Fine Gael Prime Minister, Mr. Garrett Fitzgerald, concluded the "Hillsborough Agreement" with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In exchange for a deeper Irish commitment to combat terrorism, Mr. Fitzgerald received written assurances that, "If in the future a majority of the people of Northern Ireland clearly wish for and formally consent to the establishment of a United Ireland, then the two governments will introduce legislation to convert that wish into reality."¹⁵ The Hillsborough Agreement brought condemnation and violence from Unionist elements in the North who feared it as a first step toward Catholic rule. In fact, the agreement called only for British consultation with the Irish government on certain issues as a means to protect the interests of the Catholic minority in the North.

Conclusion

Irish foreign policy has profoundly evolved since the turbulent days of the founding of the Free State. It was out of sheer necessity that it originally focused primarily on relations with Britain. De Valera's World War II gamble with neutrality worked, probably because he effectively tied it to the passionate issue of partition. (The next chapter examines neutrality in depth.) Since the War, Ireland has succeeded in finally emerging somewhat from Britain's shadow, a movement greatly facilitated by her acceptance into the European Communities and the United Nations. She sees herself today to be a link of sorts between the First and Third Worlds; it is a role she feels uniquely qualified to play.

The problem of Northern Ireland, however, continues to cast a pall over the Republic's relations with her most important neighbor. Although no solution appears imminent, some success in the working out of bilateral cooperation on this problem has been achieved. Until it is finally resolved, it will have an important impact on the formulation of Irish foreign policy.

ENDNOTES

¹Mark H. Mullin, "The Republic of Ireland," in Western Europe 1984, ed. Wayne C. Thompson (Washington: Stryker - Post Publications, 1984), p. 233.

²Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Ireland in International Affairs," in Conor Cruise O'Brien Introduces Ireland, ed. Owen D. Edwards (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 126.

³Patrick Keatinge, The Formation of Irish Foreign Policy (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1973), p. 29.

⁴The Economist, July 21, 1960, p. 374.

⁵Keatinge, p. 284.

⁶United Nations, Department of Political and Security Affairs, Unit on Apartheid, Irish Opposition to Apartheid notes and documents no. 3/71, February 1971, p. 9.

⁷The Economist, October 7, 1961, p. 22.

⁸The Economist, February 16, 1963, p. 606.

⁹The Economist, July 1, 1967, pp. 50-1.

¹⁰Republic of Ireland, Government Stationary Office, The Accession of Ireland to the European Communities (Dublin, 1972) pp. 15-21.

¹¹T. Garvin and A. Parker, "Party Loyalty and Irish Voters: The EEC Referendum as a Case Study," Economic and Social Review, October, 1972, p. 36.

¹²Dermot McAleese, "Ireland," Europe, July/August 1986, pp. 133-5.

¹³Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁴The Economist, May 22, 1982, p. 39.

¹⁵Brendan O'Leary, "The Anglo-Irish Agreement: Folly or Statecraft?" West European Politics 10:6.

III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRISH NEUTRALISM

A central feature of Irish foreign policy has been its neutrality in European military conflicts. At first blush, one might be tempted to lump Ireland with Europe's other neutrals, i.e., Sweden, Switzerland, Finland, and Austria. That would, however, be inappropriate because the Swedes and the Swiss are the only European countries with unambiguously-declared neutrality positions pre-dating the World War II era. Finland and Austria have, of course, had their neutrality imposed upon them by external powers.

Ireland's tradition of neutrality, on the other hand, is unique, having almost always been tied to the issue of partition of the Republic from the six counties making up Northern Ireland. Indeed, her constitution declares the State to encompass all of the island of Eire, including her coastal islands and territorial waters. She could not therefore ally herself with the State responsible for her nation's "artificial" partition. On the other hand, being a pluralistic democratic republic, Ireland has never been able to tolerate alliances with those particular states that have happened to place themselves in a position of

military opposition to Great Britain.

Perhaps more important to the collective Irish psyche than the issue of partition has been the feeling of independence (especially vis-a-vis Great Britain) that the neutralist stance has bestowed. After all, sovereign governments conduct foreign policy as they see fit. The fact that Ireland's neutralism particularly upsets Great Britain makes this point emphatically. This notion of independence in foreign relations has not always been stressed by Irish leaders as the basis for neutrality. When the United States entered World War II, the issue of partition was emphasized instead, and has been the case ever since.

Historical Backdrop

As when analyzing any facet of modern Irish policy, when discussing the issue of neutrality one must consider events that pre-date the founding in 1922 of the Irish Free State. Irish nationalism at the turn of the century was introspective by nature, focussing its efforts on the "de-anglicization" of the island. In 1914, as a continental war appeared imminent, an Irish Neutrality League was founded to promote Irish neutralism.¹ Prior to the outbreak of the First World War, the Kaiser's government shipped arms to both

Loyalists and Nationalists in the hope of creating a distraction for London and a consequent reduction of British influence in continental affairs.² While Irish Republican revolutionaries did not refuse such assistance, they recognized that an external threat to Great Britain constituted a threat to Ireland. As the American-born revolutionary leader Eamon de Valera said in February 1920:

"An independent Ireland would see its own independence in jeopardy the moment it saw the independence of Britain seriously threatened. Mutual self-interest would make the peoples of the two islands, if both independent, the closest possible allies in a moment of real national danger to either."³

In 1932, Mr. de Valera assumed the reins of power in the Irish republic, a position he would retain until 1948, when his government was ousted largely on economic issues. Foreign rather than domestic policy was his forte; and he, more than any other Irish statesman, was the architect of Irish neutralism.

Before de Valera's Fianna Fail party won a majority in the Dail, the Irish government had become a member of the League of Nations, an organization he had described (while his party was in opposition) as "wrapped in futility." Ironically, when de Valera took office, Ireland held the presidency of the Council of the

League. Hence he became president of an organization to which he had long objected. However, once in power, the de Valera government generally supported the policies of the League, a position widely supported in Ireland.⁴

Membership in the League of Nations meant Irish endorsement of its charter to intervene militarily when necessary to ensure the independence of member states. When the League failed in 1936 to prevent Mussolini's conquest of Ethiopia, de Valera was outraged. In the Dail on June 18th of that year he declared that the League "does not command our confidence" and that there remained but one option for the Irish Free State: "we want to be neutral."⁵

De Valera's "declaration" of neutralism came at a time when Anglo-Irish relations were especially strained, his government having been involved in an economic war with its neighbor since 1932. Before this conflict could be resolved and before Irish neutrality could achieve credibility, it was necessary to alter the treaty that had established the Irish Free State sixteen years earlier. This was accomplished on April 25, 1938 with the signing of an agreement abrogating articles six and seven of the treaty, officially transferring responsibility for the maintenance of harbor defenses at Cobh, Berehaven and Lough Swilly to the Irish. In the

same speech in which he declared Irish neutrality, de Valera, with an eye on the gathering storm in Nazi Germany, had spoken of these ports:

. . . we are in this position, that some of our ports are occupied, and although we cannot be actively committed in any way, the occupation (by the British) of those ports will give, to any foreign country that may desire a pretext, an opportunity of ignoring our neutrality.⁶

World War II

This issue of the ports was raised by Winston Churchill again in November 1940. With Britain at that time virtually alone in active military opposition to Nazi forces, he complained in the Parliament that Britain's efforts were hindered due to the unavailability of Irish ports. His complaint was answered two days later when de Valera made the following statement in Dail Eireann:

Unfortunately, that outstanding matter, the matter of **Partition**, which affects so deeply every man and every woman of Irish blood throughout the world, was left unsettled, and it remained unsettled at the outset of the war . . . We have chosen the policy of neutrality in this war because we believed that it was the right policy for our people. It is the policy which has been accepted . . . apart altogether from any questions

of sympathy on one side or another ...

I now come to the question of our ports. There can be no question, as long as we remain neutral, of handing them over on any condition whatsoever. Any attempt to bring pressure to bear on us by . . . any of the belligerents--by Britain--could only lead to bloodshed.⁷ (emphasis added)

Although de Valera did not flatly declare on that occasion that the partition issue was the cause of his neutralist stance, mentioning both in the same breath for the first time, was, nevertheless, significant. It is a theme to be refined and expounded upon time and again by de Valera and his successors, especially when aiming at an American audience.

Twice in 1940 the British offered, if somewhat conditionally, to compromise on the Partition question. On June 26th, the Churchill government formally proposed that Britain "accept the Principle of a United Ireland" in exchange for Ireland's entrance to the war "on the side of the United Kingdom and her allies" (The entire text is reproduced in the Appendix). De Valera seemingly was not satisfied, however, that the British proposal guaranteed the eventual unity of Ireland.⁸ Neville Chamberlain (who, only six weeks prior to this initiative, had resigned the office of British Prime Minister) followed the formal request with a personal letter to de Valera:

I would remind you that the whole plan depends on our obtaining the assent of Northern Ireland. I cannot, of course give a guarantee that Northern Ireland will assent, but if the plan is acceptable to Eire we should do our best to persuade Northern Ireland to accept it also in the interests of the whole of the Island.⁹ (emphasis added).

Given our understanding of de Valera and the degree of his faith in Britain, it is not surprising that he was wary of their pledge to "do their best" on this crucial issue.

Churchill repeated the offer in an enigmatic December 8th telegram to de Valera:

FOLLOWING FROM MR CHURCHILL FOR MR DE VALERA. PERSONAL. PRIVATE AND SECRET. BEGINS. NOW IS YOUR CHANCE. NOW OR NEVER. 'A NATION ONCE AGAIN'. AM VERY READY TO MEET YOU AT ANY TIME. ENDS.¹⁰

Was Churchill merely caught up in exuberance over the previous day's bombing at Pearl Harbor and the consequent imminent entry of the Americans into the war? De Valera of course did not know; nor was he aware that the British Prime Minister had sent messages that night to many leaders. He interpreted the early morning telegram as

...Mr. Churchill's way of intimating 'now is the chance for taking action which would ultimately lead to the

unification of the country'....I saw no opportunity at the moment of securing unity, that our people were determined on their attitude of neutrality...¹¹ (emphasis added).

Apparently he was unimpressed with Churchill's sincerity or with his capability to bring about the promised unification of the Thirty Counties. It is also possible that the Irish government was unwilling to enter the war unless absolutely forced to do so. This of course has the controversial implication that Ireland was perfectly happy to let others fight Nazi Germany and that their declaration of neutrality was a mere pretext for avoiding the enormous economic and human costs entailed when any nation fights a war.

As the war progressed, the British and Americans coordinated their efforts to persuade de Valera to modify his position in their favor. With D-day approaching, the American ambassador, Mr. David Gray, in a note to de Valera, urged him to expel all German and Japanese diplomats from Ireland, lest they detect Allied intentions. A concurrent British note urged favorable consideration of the American request. A concerned de Valera adamantly refused this conditional deal for Irish unity, regarding acquiescence as a de facto renunciation of neutrality.¹²

It is important to understand that, despite the

government's failure to cooperate completely, Ireland and Irishmen clearly sympathized with the Allies. Although precise figures will never be available, tens of thousands (some believe over 100,000) of Irishmen volunteered for duty with the British Army.¹³ At the national level, at a time when a German invasion of Eire appeared possible, Ireland sought defense planning assistance from Britain. In fact, the Wehrmacht did prepare plans to invade and occupy Ireland (calling it "Operation Green") as a diversionary prelude to their main assault on Great Britain, the ill-fated "Operation Sealion". The British scheme for a counter-invasion of Ireland was codenamed "Plan W".¹⁴ Fortunately for both countries, Hitler was forced to abandon these ambitions. The close cooperation (including sharing on the part of Irish officials of sensitive troop strength information) between the two Defense Ministries shown in those days was illustrative of where the sympathies (at least) of Irishmen lay.

While de Valera refused to expel the German and Japanese diplomatic missions in Eire, he also refused a German request to allow an expansion of their Dublin legation. Edouard Hempel, the German ambassador, repeatedly pressured de Valera on this point, but he was consistently refused. When, in January 1941, German

aircraft dropped bombs at various points along the Irish eastern coast, including on part of Dublin, some Irish military officers believed at the time that the attack was connected to de Valera's refusal to allow the expanded legation.¹⁵ Three were killed and 24 injured in that German attack.

Dublin was again bombed in May of 1941. This time 27 were killed and 45 were injured. At the time, the German government denied responsibility for the attack, but the Irish government had no doubt as to the source of the bombs.¹⁶ Finally, more than 20 years later, the Federal Republic of Germany did pay compensation.¹⁷

Throughout the war, de Valera made several statements ostensibly aimed at the Allied powers, but also intended for domestic consumption. Betraying his sympathies, he stated one week after the Pearl Harbor attack,

[the war's] extension to the United States of America brings a source of anxiety and sorrow to every part of this land . . . It would be unnatural, then, if we did not sympathize in a special manner with the United States . . ."¹⁸

When in January 1942 the first American troops disembarked in Northern Ireland without prior consultation with Dublin, de Valera felt compelled to "reassert Ireland's claim to reintegration of the

national territory", which he did in a press statement. President Roosevelt, having been apprised of de Valera's statement, "showed no inclination to give it serious attention."¹⁹

As the war came to a close and with victory secured, Churchill harshly criticized Ireland's neutralism in a speech broadcast on the BBC:

Owing to the action of Mr. de Valera . . . the approaches which the southern Irish ports and airfields could so easily have guarded were closed by the hostile aircraft and U-boats.

. . . if it had not been for the loyalty and friendship of Northern Ireland, we should have been forced to come to close quarters with Mr. de Valera . . .

However, with a restraint and poise . . . His Majesty's Government never laid a violent hand upon them, . . . we left the de Valera Government to frolic with the German and later with the Japanese representatives to their heart's content.

When I think of these days, I think also of . . . Irish heroes that I could easily recite and all bitterness by Britain for the Irish race dies in my heart.²⁰

De Valera's reply came in a speech to the Dail:

I know the reply I would have given a quarter of a century ago. But I have deliberately decided that that is not the reply I shall make to-night. I shall strive not to be guilty of adding any fuel to the flames of hatred and passion . . . There are, however, some things which it is my duty to say, . . . I shall try to say

them as dispassionately as I can.

Mr. Churchill makes it clear that, in certain circumstances, he would have violated our neutrality and that he would justify his action by Britain's necessity. . . .this, if accepted, would mean that Britain's necessity would become a moral code and that when this necessity became sufficiently great, other people's rights were not to count.

By resisting his temptation in this instance, Mr. Churchill . . . has advanced the cause of international morality an important step . . .

That Mr. Churchill should be irritated when our neutrality stood in the way of what he thought he vitally needed, I understand, . . .

Mr. Churchill is proud of Britain's stand alone . . . Could he not find in his heart the generosity to acknowledge that there is a small nation that stood alone, not for one year or two, but for several hundred years against aggression . . .?21

De Valera seemed here to be conciliatory, acknowledging the sacrifices of Britain while urging in non-inflammatory tones a similar acknowledgement on Churchill's part of centuries of Irish sacrifices. The war would soon be finished; Mr. de Valera's neutrality gamble had worked. The issue would, however, be raised again.

Ireland's wartime stance was domestically popular but, as R. J. Raymond points out, support for it was hardly universal. The Fine Gael, the major opposition party, was "lukewarm, if not hostile, to neutrality." Confidential correspondence between prominent Fine Gael

leaders indicated "an ambivalent attitude towards neutrality and a clear willingness to abandon it for an alliance with Great Britain if the terms were right."²²

Neutrality and Membership of NATO

The neutrality question came up again, this time in 1949 as two competing military blocs were taking shape in Europe. Would Ireland join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or would she opt instead to avoid the Alliance? Three major factors probably contributed most to Ireland's rejection of the Anglo-American offer to enter NATO. First, just as the question was being posed, Ireland was becoming accustomed to her first non-Fianna Fail government in 26 years. De Valera's party had been defeated in a February 1948 general election and the new Taoiseach, John Costello of the Fine Gael, led a tenuous coalition of all non-Fianna Fail parties. The previous government had been overthrown largely on domestic economic issues, not on questions of foreign policy. De Valera's neutralism during the war was broadly popular; so the joining of a military alliance which included Great Britain would have been politically risky for Costello. He recognized his government to be vulnerable to a de Valera challenge on this sensitive issue and thus lacked the confidence to pursue such a bold deviation from previous state policy.

Second, membership in the Atlantic Alliance, it was felt, may have obligated Ireland to upgrade her military forces. Her already fiscally-strained government simply could not afford to spend more on its defense forces. Finally, as Raymond argues, there were fears in Ireland that the consequent installation of NATO bases would make the island a likely target of Soviet nuclear attack.²³

None of these reasons were offered by the Costello government when it announced its decision. Predictably, reference was made instead to the partition question. Sean MacBride, External Affairs Minister, spoke to the matter in the Dail in February 1949: "As long as partition lasts, any military alliance or commitment involving joint military action with the State responsible for Partition must be quite out of the question as far as Ireland is concerned."²⁴ The decision not to seek NATO membership was opposed, however, by an important millieu of influential groups, including the military, the Roman Catholic Church, intellectuals, as well as many party backbenchers of all political stripes.²⁵ When Costello's decision to base the rejection of Alliance membership on the partition issue was announced, the Americans and British decided not to bother with extending a formal invitation, having agreed

in advance that an Irish response so framed would demonstrate a lack of serious interest.²⁶

Neutrality and the Membership of EEC

The question of NATO membership would arise several more times, each in connection with membership in the European Economic Community (EEC). Because of her dependence on trade with Great Britain, it was an economic imperative for Ireland to seek membership in the EEC each time Britain did. Although the treaty establishing the EEC made no mention of defense cooperation, it was not altogether clear that a non-NATO country would be welcome. That Ireland was prepared to sacrifice neutralism in exchange for Community membership was made abundantly clear when her Taoiseach, Mr. Sean Lemass, was quoted in the July 18, 1962 edition of the New York Times as saying, "We are prepared to go into an integrated Europe without any reservations at all as to how far this will take us in the field of foreign policy or defense commitments."²⁷ As we know, Charles de Gaulle vetoed the British and Irish applications out of hand in 1962, as he did again in 1967. With the departure of de Gaulle in 1968, Irish membership finally appeared plausible.

Speaking on the possibility of yet another Irish

application to the Community, the Taoiseach at the time, Mr. Jack Lynch, stated, "...we have never been ideologically neutral."²⁸ When his government did formally apply, he stated in the Dail:

We applied for membership of these communities because we believed in their aims and because we believed it would be in our best interest to do so. **Being members of that community, we would naturally be interested in the defense of the territories embraced by the communities.** There is no question of neutrality there.²⁹ (emphasis added)

Of course, Ireland did join the European Communities in 1973 (after her electorate overwhelmingly approved a referendum on membership) without being compelled to enter NATO. Some observers point out that this arrangement (i.e., having a non-NATO country in the EEC) serves the community in that it neatly separates the economic from the defense communities.

One aspect of EC membership which has a potentially significant impact on Ireland's neutralist stance is the European Political Cooperation (EPC) process. Stated simply, the EPC is an attempt to coordinate through joint consultation a European position on matters of external affairs. The obligation of any member country to profess concurrence with a given EC position is merely moral, not legal. Since the inception of the

EPC, Ireland has participated eagerly, seeing in the process an opportunity to join the Dutch, Belgians and Danes to influence European foreign policy in a "progressive" way.³⁰ The EPC has been, by EC standards, one of its more successful efforts, having achieved a common Community policy at the Conferences on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), as well as a cohesive position on most issues in the United Nations.³¹ As the EPC process strengthens, so too does its implications for defense cooperation. For now, however, absolute national independence in foreign relations remains unchallenged, as does, consequently, the ability of Irish leaders to declare adherence to neutralism.

Conclusion

Born in a deep-seated anti-British sentiment, the declaration of Irish neutralism in the war years was a major gamble which severely strained the nation. It was, however, never clearly delineated. It is certainly not neutrality in the traditional sense. Despite the declarations of her leaders, Ireland cannot profess "permanent neutrality" while simultaneously avowing to subscribe to the European Community's solemn goal of a fully-integrated Europe. Certainly, Ireland's accession

to the EEC has meant a de facto abandonment of neutralism. That her leaders had indicated a willingness to trade her queer style of neutrality for EEC membership unmistakably betrays the fact that her commitment to it is in no sense inviolable.

ENDNOTES

¹Ronan Fanning, "Irish Neutrality -- An Historical Review," Irish Studies in International Affairs 1:27-38.

²Sir John Biggs-Davidson, "How Neutral is the Irish Republic?," in Rusi and Brassey's Defence Yearbook--1985, (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1985), pp. 43-55.

³Eamon De Valera, Quotations from Eamon De Valera, ed. Proinsias MacAonghusa (Dublin: Mercer Press, 1983), p. 23.

⁴Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Ireland in International Affairs," in Conor Cruise O'Brien Introduces Ireland, ed. Owen D. Edwards (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 112.

⁵Patrick Keatinge, The Formulation of Irish Foreign Policy (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1973), p. 24.

⁶De Valera, pp. 63-4.

⁷Eamon de Valera, Ireland's Stand (Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son, 1946), pp. 24-5, 27.

⁸The Earl of Longford and Thomas P. O'Neill, Eamon De Valera, A Biography (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1971) pp. 366-7.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰From Joseph T. Carroll, Ireland in the War Years (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1975), p. III.

¹¹Longford and O'Neill, p. 393.

¹²Ibid., p. 405.

¹³Biggs-Davidson, pp. 47-8.

¹⁴See Robert Fisk, In Time of War (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983) pp. 189-239.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 316-17.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 337.

¹⁷Carroll, p. 52.

¹⁸Maurice Moynihan, ed., Speeches and Statements by Eamon De Valera (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1978), pp. 461-2.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 464.

²⁰De Valera, p. 89.

²¹Ibid., pp. 90-4.

²²Raymond J. Raymond, "Irish Neutrality: Ideology or Pragmatism?," International Affairs 60:34.

²³Ibid., p. 40.

²⁴Dennis Driscoll, "Is Ireland Really Neutral?," Irish Studies in International Affairs 1:56.

²⁵Raymond, p. 39.

²⁶Sir Nicholas Henderson, The Birth of NATO (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), pp. 77-8.

²⁷C.L. Sulzberger, "The End of a Neutral Myth," The New York Times July 18, 1962, p. 28.

²⁸The Irish Times, February 2, 1969.

²⁹Fanning, p. 37.

³⁰Trevor C. Salmon, "Ireland: A Neutral in the Community?," Journal of Common Market Studies 20:216.

³¹Stephen George, Politics and Policy in the European Community (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) p. 167.

IV. Ireland and European Defense Cooperation Today

Having examined the nature and development of Irish neutralism, we come now to the question of the potential value to NATO of full Irish cooperation in Western defense efforts. Specifically, what gains might NATO accrue and at what costs? During the Second World War Mr. Churchill complained loudly that the Irish refusal to make available Irish ports created for the Allies an unnecessary additional burden. Was that true then and, if so, does it remain true today? Some analysts assert that, in the event of general war in Europe, Ireland would serve nicely as a staging area for troops and materiel inbound from North America. They also maintain that the Island provides unique advantages as a base for air patrols of the North Atlantic. Each of these assertions will be considered in this chapter.

Next, we look at the Irish Defence forces and evaluate the Irish commitment to a modern military capable of contributing effectively to joint efforts towards European defense. In so doing, it becomes apparent that Ireland's military forces are ill-equipped and not properly trained to face a well equipped and trained opposing force. Her military has evolved instead into a quasi-police force skilled at specialized, traditionally non-military missions, and

would therefore be of doubtful value to NATO in time of crisis. These two factors (the marginal strategic importance of the Island and the unsuitability of Irish military forces) provide no incentive to NATO's political leadership to urge Ireland's to join the Alliance. First, however, we consider the domestic pressures which affect Irish defense policy formation.

An End in Sight to Neutrality?

When Eamon de Valera first declared an official policy of neutrality many Irishmen opposed him. The success of the policy bred its own support. Today, neutralism is seen by many to be a fundamental principle of Irish foreign policy. Political leaders go to great length to avow their determination to maintain military neutrality, especially when advocating a surrender of some sovereignty to the institutions of the EEC.

As shown, the division of the island as imposed by Britain has been given as the basis for Irish neutrality, although it has seldom been flatly declared that an end to partition would necessarily bring about an end to the policy. Partition could end in a number of ways, none of them likely in the foreseeable future. First, as called for in the current Anglo-Irish Agreement, if a majority of the population of Northern

Ireland voted to join the Irish Republic, it would be accomplished through bilateral action. While the Protestants still comprise the majority of Northerners, their birthrate is substantially lower than that of the Roman Catholic minority, and the Catholics could conceivably constitute a majority early in the next century. What is not known is, should this come to pass, whether those Catholics would prefer annexation to the Republic over continued citizenship of the United Kingdom.

A second scenario requires the full political integration of Western Europe under the auspices of the European Communities. Such an eventuality has long been a goal of the EC, yet progress toward it has been slow. Were it ever to come about, it would mean all the member nations would become part of one large nation; there would be no international borders between them. Irish neutrality would also necessarily vanish as the super-government determined foreign and defense policies for the new nation. Even the most optimistic European integrationists are not, however, predicting the formation of a "United States of Europe" to occur in the foreseeable future.

Another possibility is that the United Kingdom could unilaterally cede the Six Counties to the Irish

Republic. A recently published poll shows that half of Britons surveyed favor a withdrawal of the British Army from Northern Ireland.¹ The problems experienced by the British in policing this area are well-known; and even by United Kingdom standards, Northern Ireland is an economically depressed area. Yet, that the British would voluntarily abandon Northern Ireland must be considered a remote possibility. There have been no indications that the British have seriously contemplated such move. Moreover, given the area's troubles, it is not a certain that Dublin would welcome the event. In any case, the ending of partition does not necessarily guarantee Irish cooperation in European defense, it would merely mean the removal of the major declared pretext for Irish neutralism; for it has become for many (as Eamon de Valera's outspoken granddaughter put it) a "cornerstone of our foreign policy" and it cannot be bargained away for reunification.²

A final possibility for the ending of Irish military neutrality and the beginning of Irish defense cooperation would be a simple reversal of Irish policy in this area. The Irish government could, theoretically, declare such a dramatic change at any time, but because of domestic political considerations, it would not be able to do so. As shown in a 1984 poll, 77

per cent of Irishmen questioned believed that Ireland should remain neutral should a war break out between the superpowers, while 17 and 2 per cent supported siding with the United States and the Soviet Union, respectively. A similar poll taken the following year showed 64 per cent believing that Ireland should never join any military alliance. That same poll found 31 per cent confessing they did not know what Irish neutrality meant.³ These results suggest that a great number of Irishmen who support neutrality really are not sure of its meaning but nevertheless believe it should never be abandoned in favor of cooperating on defense matters with other West European democracies. This evidence lends credence to the notion that the policy of military neutrality has assumed an "untouchable" status. That Irish governmental leaders felt it necessary to repeatedly reassure the people that neutrality would be essentially unaffected by first, Irish membership of the EEC and, second, the relinquishment of national sovereignty required by the Single European Act, illustrates the sensitivity of the issue.

When Ireland declined to join the newly-forming NATO in 1948 its decision was opposed by important groups in Irish society.⁴ This is not the case today.

The Irish Church, for example, sponsors an institute for "peace" studies, whose published works clearly support the retention of Irish military neutrality on what are seen as moral grounds.⁵ Even Irish military men no longer seem to question the wisdom of the national defense policy. An Cosantoir, the Irish Defense Magazine, published an article in November 1986 on Irish Defense Policy in which the author outlined ways the state might best preserve her neutrality should war break out between Europe's two military blocs.⁶ Comments from the magazine's readers (i.e., Irish military personnel) were encouraged and many letters were published in following issues. Most of the letter writers complained about the lack of a coherent national strategy, but none suggested a repudiation of neutrality. While this was not in any way a scientific poll of Irish military opinion, that none of the writers advocated NATO membership is nevertheless revealing. Certainly, it seems that Irish soldiers are not clamoring for abandonment of neutralism as national policy.

Other indicators also suggest that Ireland's leaders would not soon seek NATO membership. One of them is the monetary costs that are presumed to be involved. Figure 4-1 illustrates that Ireland's level

of defense expenditure (per capita) is far below that of most NATO countries, with three notable exceptions: Iceland, Spain, and Portugal. Furthermore, it is far below that of the other major European neutrals. This may be because the other neutrals lay between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, while Ireland can afford the luxury her geographic position affords her, far removed from the East/West frontier. Ireland has for several years been running one of the largest fiscal deficits (per capita) in Western Europe. Given her present economic troubles (deficits coupled with high unemployment) it is clear that she could ill-afford to bring her level of defense spending to that of most of her NATO-member neighbors.

Second, there is the fear that NATO membership would mean allowing NATO bases on the soil of the Republic and that they would invite Soviet nuclear attack in an all-out European war. Soviet military planners might not have reason to pre-plan targeting on Ireland since she is not part of NATO. The problem with this logic is that it ignores the possibility that a Soviet objective in a future war might be to deny Irish facilities (especially airfields and ports) to NATO by destroying them at some point in the conflict. In addition, Ireland could suffer severe deleterious effects of a nuclear war (fallout, electromagnetic

pulse) from warheads detonated in other parts of Europe, even if she is spared direct attack.

TABLE 4-1

Military Expenditures of West European and other NATO Countries, 1980-84 (Avg),

	% of GNP	per capita**
Austria*	1.2	107
Belgium	3.3	274
Canada	2.1	260
Denmark	2.5	265
Finland*	1.6	155
France	4.1	389
Greece	6.5	235
Iceland	0.0	0
Ireland*	1.8	85
Italy	2.6	162
Luxembourg	0.9	114
The Netherlands	3.2	298
Norway	3.0	387
Portugal	3.6	70
Spain	2.1	84
Sweden*	3.2	339
Switzerland*	2.0	317
United Kingdom	5.1	403
United States	6.0	874
West Germany	3.4	356
NATO (Europe)	3.7	273

* - denotes neutral country

** - constant 1983 dollars

Source: US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1986.

Finally, membership of NATO would mean to many

Irishmen a loss of independence in national foreign policy.⁷ This suggests that any nation which is a member of any military alliance does not have an independent foreign policy. This is, of course, not true for those countries and it would not be true for Ireland. However, the need for a feeling of independence from Britain has always been a major ingredient of Irish nationalism, which in turn spawned Irish neutralism. For the Irish, giving up neutralism therefore does mean giving up a measure independence. The significance of this cannot be lost on Irish leaders.

Ireland's Strategic Value

If there were an important and unique military advantage that Ireland, by virtue of her geostrategic position, could bring to NATO, it should be expected that her leaders must have faced some external pressure to enter the Alliance. It must be assumed that both NATO and Warsaw Pact military planners have at least speculated about Ireland's potential value. The official results of this type of guesswork is, of course, not available in open sources because of its politically sensitive -- and therefore classified -- nature. We must therefore rely on formerly classified

materials and on unofficial speculations by knowledgeable persons. In the case of Ireland, these sources reach a wide range of conclusions. An objective analysis reveals that her territory offers some advantages, but none are absolutely critical.

For example, as reported in the Irish Times, (5 November 1980), the U.S. National Security Council secretly opined (as NATO was forming) that "Irish military facilities would be merely 'complementary to those already available to North Atlantic forces through the adherence to the NATO Treaty of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.'"8 A more recent analysis was contained in Sir John Hackett's fictional "future history" of a World War Three fought mainly in Western Europe. Hackett, a retired British Army general officer, was aided in the writing of his novel by other retired NATO officers. One chapter, dedicated entirely to Ireland, has the Republic joining the war effort after a gradual pre-war withdrawal from neutralism based in part on her membership of the EEC, and in part on a Franco-Irish defense pact concluded well before the outbreak of hostilities. According to Hackett, Irish facilities would be important:

The use of Shannon and west coast sites was vital for maritime operations in the Atlantic;

availability of Irish airfields and ports was essential for the successful operation of the Atlantic 'air bridge' reinforcement operations into France and Britain for the European front; and the deployment of mobile radar and other surveillance systems would give much needed depth to NATO's air defence against Soviet attack, by sea or air, from the West.⁹

Hackett depicts a NATO air force which is able to extend the range of its patrols against Warsaw Pact naval vessels by flying out of Irish air bases on the West coast. Other analysts see this advantage as secondary in light of the primary NATO reliance on anti-submarine defenses far to the north, along the Greenland-Iceland-Norway axis.¹⁰ Hackett's second point, that Irish facilities would be "essential" to allied reinforcement operations, is also questionable. Ireland is only one of many possible destinations along Europe's western approaches that could be utilized for the transshipment of men and war materiel, and is the only one not currently a NATO member. Any shipments that might be off-loaded in Ireland would have to face another air- or sealift before they could reach the central front (the presumed site of the heaviest combat). Thus, Ireland would provide less flexibility in the transshipment of reinforcements because the option to move them further by land would not be available.

The final advantage, as seen by Hackett, is that surveillance radar stations erected in Ireland would add depth to NATO's air defense detection system. This presumes a NATO vulnerability to air attack from the West -- which, while not impossible -- is not seen as the most likely direction from which air raids would come. While military radars on Irish soil might provide an extra cushion, their criticality would depend on two factors. First is the availability of air- and sea-based radar platforms in the North Atlantic. If Western intelligence is able to predict Soviet intentions to out-flank NATO's air defenses by attacking from the west, these resources could be deployed quickly to augment those land-, air-, and sea-based radars already present. Ireland-based radars would be of increased importance only if NATO were completely surprised. Even then, NATO has a powerful long-range surveillance radar permanently emplaced in Northern Ireland. A second factor is the wartime useability of information gained from Ireland-based civil aviation radars currently used to guide aircraft from the North Atlantic to European destinations, and vice versa. In peacetime, the data from these radars are available through electronic links to other civil air facilities in Western Europe. A neutral Ireland would not have to deny this information

to those who normally receive it in peacetime.¹¹ Data gained from this link by NATO would not include verification of "friend or foe" status of aircraft through encoded transponder returns, but questionable targets could be challenged either electronically by other NATO sources or visually by by interceptor aircraft. As with its maritime defenses, NATO's principal protection from a "back door" air attack comes from facilities far to the north of Ireland,¹² as attacking aircraft would have to come from bases on the Kola peninsula, in the extreme northwest of the USSR, adjacent to Norway.

Despite Hackett's application of the terms "vital" and "essential" to the potential of NATO facilities in Ireland, this assessment cannot be supported. Each of the missions he assigns to Ireland can be accomplished by other countries or through other means. A more sober assessment is that Irish facilities would be "nice to have," but they are in no way critical. As such, it is not surprising that there is no evidence that Ireland is being pressured by her economic allies to enter their defensive alliance; and that the United States is not pressuring Britain to end Irish partition, so that Ireland could be free to join NATO.

Irish Defence Forces

Ireland's military is quite unlike any other in Europe. In practice, it is more like a police force than a traditional military one. Its history, composition, equipment, and capabilities support the view that the Irish defense forces are more appropriately labeled a quasi-police force, not unlike the U.S. Coast Guard. These characteristics of the military in Ireland make it potentially less valuable to NATO's forces in time of war and, therefore, less urgent that Ireland join the Alliance.

Ireland's first legitimate Army was formed in 1922 from elements that had for years conducted a guerilla war against the British. First envisioned as a 4,000 man force, it eventually grew to 55,000 as the new state fought a civil war. Once the insurgency had been quelled, most of the Army was demobilized into reserve forces, many of which were units of volunteers. In the 1930s the forces were allowed to run down, with very little heavy equipment available. The Army mobilized again in September 1939 as the nation feared invasion. During "The Emergency", a Local Security Force (LSF) was formed with the dual mission of aiding both the Army and the national police force (Gardai). Among the duties of the LSF were traffic control, communications,

protective missions, first aid, and transport.

With the end of the war and the cancellation of the Emergency, the Army was again demobilized. The Regular Army was greatly curtailed and a larger reserve force, now called An Forsa Cosanta Aitiuil (FCA), was organized. The late 40s and 50s saw another deterioration of the Irish forces, but the posting of troops to the Congo in 1960 revealed the problems wrought by this neglect, a revelation that led to improvements in pay and equipment. The troubles in Northern Ireland in the 60s and 70s brought more emphasis on police-style missions at the expense of traditional military ones.¹³

The Army remains the largest and most important part of the Irish military establishment. With a total strength (active) of 12,181 soldiers, it is poorly-equipped to engage a modern opposing force. It has at its disposal only 14 light tanks, 122 armoured cars and personnel carriers, 12 105mm cannons, 58 howitzers, and 521 mortars of varying sizes. Anti-tank weapons include 543 aging rockets and only four modern Milan guided weapons. Air Defenses are provided by only 26 40mm guns and seven shoulder-fired missiles. The newly-adopted light infantry weapon is the Austrian-built Steyr Aug A1 rifle, which fires a 5.56 mm round (standard NATO

caliber).¹⁴ If it is fielded as planned, it will be the most up-to-date weapon in the Irish arsenal.

The Navy has only 930 sailors to man its one modern patrol vessel (capable of carrying one air force helicopter), four older patrol craft, and two minesweepers. The Air Force's 830 men have at their disposal only six jet trainers, nine light trainers, eight Reims-Cessna "liaison" aircraft, 15 helicopters, three Beech Super King Air 200s, and one small passenger jet.¹⁵

As the Irish economy soured after a period of relative health in the 1970s, the Irish Defence Forces have been hit with severe budgetary cuts. Moreover, a large portion of the budget has been directed toward supporting internal policing missions. As the Minister for Defence, Mr. M.J. Noonan stated last May,

When the country is facing economic difficulties and when because of scarcity of financial resources, many drastic economies over a wide area have to be made, it is sad we should be obliged to commit such a substantial amount of Defence expenditure in this direction (Aid to the Civil Power).¹⁶

These drastic cuts have forced the military to halt all recruiting as well as to abandon some planned replacement and modernization of equipment. A recent analysis by the Journal of Defense and Diplomacy

describes the effect of these budget cuts as prompting "a growing concern that morale is being sapped."

While there are some Irish soldiers in elite military units who are highly proficient at traditional military tasks, it is clear that most Irish soldiers and sailors perform duties more often thought of as quasi-police work. In a section entitled, "Who We are...What We do", the Irish Defence Forces Handbook lists the following:17

- 11,000 parties supplied for border checkpoints
- 10,000 patrols on the Border
- service in Lebanon (UNIFIL) since 1978
- 86 foreign fishing vessels arrested in 1987
- 58 air-sea rescues in 1987
- 4,000 escorts for explosives, blasting operations and cash shipments 1986.
- 200 bomb disposal missions
- ceremonial duties
- publication of the Defence Forces Magazine
- the teaching of skills and trades by the Apprentice School.

A military force experienced only in these types of duties, and which is equipped as lightly as Ireland's is, could not hope to succeed in repelling a determined invasion of its own shores, not to mention making a contribution to the defense of another nation's border at the same time.

Conclusion

Because of domestic political considerations stemming in large part from the elevation in Ireland of neutrality to a nearly sacred status, Ireland's leaders could not (even if they wanted to) reverse the current national defense posture. Even in the highly unlikely event that Partition were ended, they would face considerable opposition to such a move. In the early post-war years, important segments of Irish society advocated a rejection of neutrality in favor of joint NATO. Those groups no longer voice their earlier objections; they often now encourage the policy.

In addition, Ireland offers NATO nothing critical in the way of strategic advantage or military forces that is so valuable as to impart to its political leaders a sense that Ireland must be pressured to join the Alliance. The island is at best of secondary importance from a geostrategic standpoint. Her military forces are neither trained nor equipped to fight along the side of NATO's.

If the Republic of Ireland is not to be a member of NATO in peacetime, the question then becomes: What would her leaders opt to do in time of crisis?

ENDNOTES

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2. Patrick Keatinge, A Singular Stance, Irish Neutrality in the 1980's (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1984), p. 2.
3. From P. Keatinge, "Ireland and the West European Union," in La relance de l'Union de l'Europe occidentale, ed. Panos Tsakaloyannis (Maastricht: Institut Europeen d'Administration Publique, 1987), pp. 105-6.
4. R.J. Raymond, "Irish Neutrality: Ideology or Pragmatism," International Affairs 60:39.
5. See, for example, Bill McSweeney, ed. Ireland and the Threat of Nuclear War (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1985).
6. Commandant C. Mangan, "Irish Defense Policy--a discussion" An Cosantoir, Irish Defence Magazine, April 1987, pp. 37-43.
7. Raymond, pp. 39-40.
8. Ronan Fanning, "Irish Neutrality--An Historical Review," Irish Studies in International Affairs 1:34.
9. Sir John Hackett, et al., The Third World War: The Untold Story (London: MacMillan, 1982) p. 147.
10. Keatinge, A Singular Stance, p. 60.
11. See Convention Concerning the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in case of War on Land, Signed at the Hague, 18 October 1907.
12. Keatinge, p. 62.
13. From "Our Origin and Development," in The Irish Defence Forces Handbook, (Dublin: Army Headquarters, 1987) pp. 89-99.
14. Defence Forces Handbook, p. 8.
15. Statistics from "Republic of Ireland," Journal of Defense and Diplomacy 5:34.

16. The Irish Defence Forces Handbook, p. 4.
17. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

V. IN TIME OF CRISIS

Factors Influencing the Decision

It being apparent that Ireland is not soon to be a member of the North Atlantic Alliance nor a party to any other cooperative security arrangement, the question of her potential for participation in a joint defense of Western Europe in a time of crisis (i.e., war) arises. To be sure, speculation on this matter is tricky, mainly because much probably would depend on three factors. The first is the perception Irishmen and their leaders would have of where the blame for the conflict lay. In other words, "Who started it?" Assuming that 1) NATO remains a strictly defensive defense organization without aggressive designs on Eastern Europe, (2) that it behaves accordingly, and (3) that the Irish therefore place the responsibility for instigating warfare on the Warsaw Pact, (despite Soviet protests to the contrary); this should not be a problem.

The second factor is the perception on the part of the Irish of the direct threat to their country and the degree to which that threat can be attenuated by assuming various defense postures. This perception is itself influenced by other factors. For example, Ireland may be more threatened by a nuclear NATO-Warsaw Pact war than by a non-nuclear war because even if she

staunchly retains her neutrality, that would not protect her from radioactive fallout or "nuclear winter." Acknowledgement of that fact would not necessarily add weight to the "join the war" argument if, despite this weakness, neutrality is seen as the most positive contribution Ireland could make to the effort to limit the war. This discussion begs the question of bilateral Soviet-Irish relations. Would it surprise anyone if the Soviets should officially and forcefully rededicate themselves early in the war to their responsibility (as a belligerent) to leave Ireland (a neutral) alone in exchange for an Irish pledge not to aid NATO? Another concern for a neutral Ireland is that her neutrality might be brusquely ignored by one of the warring parties if that party envisioned a great enough gain by so doing. As the Dutch, Belgians, Norwegians, Danes, and Rumanians know well, such an event would not be unprecedented. A co-concern in this same vein is that one of the belligerents might opt to destroy attractive Irish facilities by air and/or missile attacks as a means of pre-emptively denying these assets to an enemy it perceives as contemplating commandeering Ireland for its own advantage. The complicated nature of these considerations underscores the difficulty of predicting with confidence Irish reaction to a Third World War.

A third and vitally important factor is that Ireland is not truly neutral at all. She is historically, culturally, and economically tied to Western Europe and the United States. Her choice to avoid military alliances was a manifestation of her independence; it was an overt way of thumbing her nose at Great Britain. Any pretense of true Irish neutrality evaporated with her eager application for membership of the European Economic Community. Because of this, Ireland is not viewed as a neutral by other European neutrals. For example, at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe which brought together 35 European states, plus the U.S. and Canada, Ireland was not invited to participate in the Neutral and Non-Aligned group. As a member of the EEC, she belonged to the European Political Cooperation group.

Ireland's membership of the EEC has brought her significant gains, especially in two areas: First, the large Irish agricultural sector has greatly benefitted from the opening of continental markets to her farm exports. Farm income in Ireland has grown nearly every year since the nation entered the EEC.¹ Moreover, because the size of the agricultural labor force has been declining, growth in farm income per capita is even more impressive.² While it is difficult to determine

how much of this growth is directly attributable to EEC membership, most analysts agree such sustained growth would have been otherwise impossible.

A second way in which Ireland has benefitted from EEC membership is in the direct transfer of Community funds to Irish coffers. Thus has been accomplished primarily through two vehicles, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). Under EEC guidelines, all of Ireland qualifies as an economically depressed area and is therefore eligible to receive ERDF assistance. In the thirteen years the fund has operated, it has allocated over one billion dollars to Ireland.³ The ESF, with its main goal to attack unemployment, has also been important to Ireland. Nearly eight percent of the monies from the Fund have gone to Ireland, the largest per capita distribution in the Community.⁴

Another manifestation of the close ties which Ireland has with the EEC/NATO nations is her reliance on them as trading partners. As tables 5-1 and 5-2 show, Ireland trades mainly with Western Europe and the United States, while her trade with Eastern Europe is insignificant by comparison. This is especially important, for Ireland is heavily dependent on trade for the production of wealth. It is interesting to note how

the composition of her foreign trade has changed over the years. The importance of the United Kingdom as a trading partner has declined dramatically, especially as an export market for Irish goods. To a lesser extent, this is true of the aggregate of NATO countries, but is nearly offset by the growth of imports to Ireland from those nations. Despite the changing nature of NATO-Irish trade (mainly due to EEC membership) it remains clear that, because of the importance of trade to

Table 5-1. Irish Trade, Imports in selected years, by trading partner (value as % of total imports)

	<u>1962</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>
United Kingdom	49.9	49.5	46.6	50.8	42.7
United States	7.6	8.6	6.5	8.7	17.0
NATO total	76.5	77.4	76.8	81.6	83.2
USSR	0.8	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.5
Warsaw Pact total	2.6	1.9	2.5	1.3	1.5
Source: United Nations, <u>Yearbook of International Trade Statistics</u>					

Table 5-2. Irish Trade, Exports in selected years, by trading partner (value as a % of total exports)

	<u>1962</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>
United Kingdom	73.9	65.7	56.4	42.7	33.0
United States	8.3	11.7	9.2	5.4	9.8
NATO total	89.4	87.6	84.9	82.1	80.6
USSR	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.6	0.3
Warsaw Pact total	0.4	0.5	1.2	1.3	0.6
Source: United Nations, <u>Yearbook of International Trade Statistics</u>					

Ireland's economy and because the countries of NATO account for over four-fifths of her trade volume, Ireland's most important economic ties are to the nations that happen to make up the NATO alliance. Certainly, Ireland would have little to gain and a great deal to lose should her biggest trading partners be economically ravaged by war while she stood idly by.

Perhaps more important to the issue of Irish priorities than the direct monetary transfers received from the EEC and the reliance on NATO countries for trade is the symbolic importance of Ireland having subscribed to the principles of the founding treaties of the EEC. She has committed herself to the Community and to the enhancement of its economic and political well-being through the integration of member's economies and bodies politic.

If war ever did come again to Europe a neutral Ireland might be able to avoid direct attack. Then again it might not. Her natural inclination must be to join the fight to defend her sister democracies, especially when no iron clad guarantees could be given by anyone that neutrality would save her. A neutral Ireland could not count on NATO's help should she be attacked. An Ireland that cooperated in the defense of her economic allies and which actively provided for the

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IRELAND AND THE DEFENSE OF WESTERN EUROPE ISSUES AND
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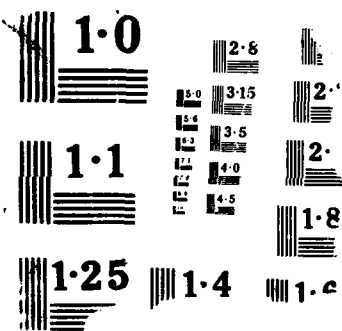
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defense of her own shores, could expect such help. These are the calculations her leaders would have to make.

Conclusion

Ireland's current defense policy is an expression of national sovereignty and independence. It was born of a need to demonstrate that this young nation, after centuries of sometimes harsh subordination to a powerful neighbor, is able and determined to conduct its own affairs. The policy of neutrality was declared near the onset of World War II in part because the nation was ill-prepared to join the fight, and in part because anti-British sentiments of many Irishmen would have made entry to the war too divisive. Irish neutrality was equated with the partition of the Island: no military alliances were possible as long as the national question remained unresolved. Eamon de Valera's neutrality gamble worked and the policy received broad support.

A weak coalition government was in power at the time when a rebuilding Western Europe formed a defense partnership with the United States. Overtures made by NATO to Ireland were rebuffed, although some important interests in the Republic opposed that decision. Partition was again offered as the reason.

In the years that followed, the Irish sought a role for themselves in the international arena. After years of frustration, she finally won admittance to the United Nations. It was in the UN that she began to play a role as go-between for the First World (to which she had obvious ties) and the Third World (to which she, a formerly oppressed country, felt a special kinship). Ireland has eagerly supported the UN mandate of seeking peace. When called upon to contribute troops to UN missions, she complied. She did not see this as in conflict with her neutrality, rather she saw UN duties as complementary to her progressive foreign policy.

At the same time, much of the rest of Western Europe was forming a bold economic and unprecedented political union. As the United Kingdom applied for membership, so too did Ireland. So important was membership of the European Community to Ireland that her leaders indicated a willingness to abandon neutrality and join NATO, if that were the price demanded of her. When it was not, her neutrality was further strengthened. However, in the context of EEC membership, her neutrality has been challenged. So far, it remains intact. As the Community evolves, becoming increasingly involved in foreign policy questions, Irish neutrality will come further into question.

The domestic pressure to join the Alliance is slight. Neutrality is popular and is seen as the most appropriate defense posture for the nation. In any case, Ireland offers NATO little in the way of geostrategic advantage or troop strength. Her military is unlike that of other NATO countries, being primarily involved in quasi-police duties, for which it is trained and equipped. It would be no match for a Warsaw Pact army. Because Ireland offers NATO so little, it comes as no surprise that she receives no pressure from NATO's leaders to join with them in Europe's defense.

However, in the event that war did again come to Europe, Ireland might not join NATO, but "would act like it were a member."⁵ The reasons are clear. In addition to the fact that she shares with the NATO countries a similar culture, similar Judeo-Christian ethical values, and similar pluralist-democratic political values; Ireland is economically dependent on the NATO nations. Moreover, she is legally committed (through membership of the EEC) to NATO's European nations. In these vital respects, she is not neutral at all.

ENDNOTES

¹Cox, P.G. and B. Kearney. "The Impact of the Common Agricultural Policy," in Ireland and the European Communities, ed. David Coombes (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1983), p. 171.

²Ibid., p. 171-72.

³The Commission of the European Communities, The ERDF in Figures, 1986, Luxemburg, 1986. p. 6. (Exchange rates calculated by the author.)

⁴Based on ESF data and the author's calculations.

⁵Conor Cruise O'Brien, interview with author, April 1988.

APPENDIX

The revised terms of the final British offer of Irish unity, conveyed to Eamon de Valera on 28 June 1940 and signed by Neville Chamberlain.

- (i) A declaration to be made by the United Kingdom Government forthwith accepting the principle of a United Ireland. This declaration would take the form of a solemn undertaking that the Union is to become at an early date an accomplished fact from which there shall be no turning back.
- (ii) A joint Body, including representatives of the Government of Eire and the Government of Northern Ireland, to be set up at once to work out the Constitutional and other practical details of the Union of Ireland. The United Kingdom Government to give such assistance towards the work of this Body as might be desired, the purpose of the work being to establish at as early a date as possible the whole machinery of government of the Union.
- (iii) A joint Defence Council representative of Eire and Northern Ireland to be set up immediately.
- (iv) The Government of Eire to invite British naval vessels to have the use of ports in Eire, and British troops and aeroplanes to cooperate with the Eire Forces and to be stationed in such positions in Eire as may be agreed between the two Governments, for the purpose of increasing the security of Eire against the fate which has overcome neutral Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg.
- (v) The Government of Eire to intern all German and Italian aliens in the country and to take any further steps necessary to suppress Fifth Column activities.
- (vi) The United Kingdom Government to provide military equipment at once to the Government of Eire in accordance with the particulars given in the annex.

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